THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. The domestic passenger growth has declined to negative 5.1% during the year 2008 as compare to growth of 46.5% and 32.5% in the full calendar year 2006 and 2007 respectively.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The proposal to allow foreign airlines to invest in domestic airline is being examined.

Determination of flight path of aircrafts

124. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is mandatory for aircrafts, when airborne, to fly only along the flight - path/altitude pre-determined or as per Air Traffic Controller (ATC)'s direction;

(b) if so, the salient features of the mechanism available with the authorities for monitoring the flight-path being cruised by each domestic and international aircrafts in the respective regions of the country;

(c) the steps taken reflecting to detection of deviation from the pre-charted route whenever resorted to by any aircraft, indicating the possible time-gap between such detection and reflective action;

(d) the past instances of occurrence of such flight-path deviations; and

(e) the actions taken in respective instances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Aircraft fight path is monitored with the help of radars, ADS(C) and position reports given by aircraft through VHF or HF in the area of non-radar coverage.

(c) to (e) Whenever deviation is unavoidable due to bad weather conditions, especially during monsoon Reason, or any other compelling reasons from the safe aircraft operations point of view, the aircraft normally request ATC for such deviation indicating the extent of time/ distance, which is authorized by ATC immediately after sorting out the other conflicting traffic. The aircraft regains original flight path as soon as it is clear of bad weather or any other compelling circumstances and report to ATC. Such situations are handle in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures of ICAO.

Delay in air services

125. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the frequent delay in landing and take off of aircrafts in the country; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The primary reasons for delay in landing and operation of aircraft are: